



State of Wisconsin GOVERNOR'S STATE TRAILS COUNCIL

Meeting Minutes

FINAL - as of 8/6/10

Thursday, April 22, 2010

Governor's Conference Room, 116 East State Capitol, Madison

10:00 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.

State Trails Council Members Present: Ken Carpenter, Randy Harden, Tom Huber, Jim Joque, Skip Maletzke, Mike McFadzen, Tom Thornton, Robbie Webber

State Trails Council Members Not In Attendance: Dave Phillips

Wisconsin DNR Staff Present: Secretary Matt Frank, Laurie Osterndorf, Dan Schuller, Peter Biermeier, Brigit Brown, Rebecca Gass, Andy Janicki, Paul Sandgren, Keith Warnke, Joseph Warren

Others Present: Randy Bailey, Ron Bergin, Hansi Johnson, Bryan Much, Judy Peterson, Gene Roberts, Harold Schmidt, John Schnorr, John Siegert, Geoff Snudden, Matt Tucker, Marty Wiegel, Jack Zebrowski

10:00 A.M. – Agenda review/repair and approval of January meeting minutes

- Harden called the meeting to order. Approval of the January 11, 2010 meeting minutes by Webber. Seconded by Thornton. Minutes approved.

10:10 A.M. – Chair Report

- Harden, McFadzen and Phillips met with Senator Holperin in April to discuss and receive feedback on how to move forward with the Ad Hoc Committee recommendations to restructure the Council. Harden and McFadzen will give a full report later in the meeting.

10:15 A.M. – State Trails Council Member Reports

- *Off-Highway Vehicles.* The LUV pilot program was extended (now called the UTV pilot program), and is now statewide for any counties that want to participate in the program. This statewide pilot will expire June 30, 2012. The Wisconsin Outdoor Education Expo will take place in Beaver Dam May 13-14, 2010. Over 4,000 kids are expected to attend the expo. Harden passed out a new brochure from WATVA. WOHVA and WOHMA are working on registration programs and talking with county forests about trails. Both WOHVA and WATVA held their annual conventions over the weekend of April 17.
- *Department of Transportation.* The DOT administers three programs to fund trails; Transportation Enhancements, Safe Routes to School, and the Bicycle and Pedestrian Facilities Program. The deadline to submit applications for funding from the programs, except Safe Routes to School, is typically April 15, but this year the deadline was delayed. Funding recommendations will be sent to the DOT Secretary in October. The National Household Travel Survey was released, and bicycle and pedestrian trips have increased. Bicycling accounts for about one percent of all annual household trips.
- *Snowmobiling.* The 2009-10 season was very good overall. There are two bills the Legislature is considering regarding snowmobiling. One is for a registration program, where an operator would register once, and then purchase a trail pass in succeeding years. The other bill relates to operating while intoxicated. Thornton stated he did not believe either would pass this year, but if the bills get reintroduced early next year, they may have a chance at passing. There were 21 snowmobile



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fatalities last season, many related to alcohol. Bridge guidelines and water regulation permits are going to become an issue for all trails. The costs associated with bridges are rapidly increasing.

- *Cross-country Skiing.* Cross-country skiing is seeing growth in every aspect of the sport. The American Birkebeiner was the biggest ever, with over 8,400 participants. Parks and Forests did a very good job keeping the trails groomed during the past season, whether it was volunteers or staff, and kept skiers coming back. The lighted ski trails at the Greenbush Recreation Area in the Northern Kettle Moraine Forest were very popular. The lighting fixtures were donated by a local company and are very energy efficient. The ski club is paying for the cost of lighting the trails.
- *Users with Disabilities.* In some instances the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is loosely defined, and sometimes answers about the Act do not come about until they go to court. Joque has worked with Huber on some issues with crossing structures. Andy Janicki's presentation later in the meeting will show all aspects of outdoor recreation for disabled users. Brown is working on a policy and procedure for motorized vehicle permits for non-hunting access by disabled users, on which Joque will provide input.
- *Equestrian.* The Midwest Horse Fair which took place April 16-18 in Madison, is one of the top three equestrian events in the country, and was a big success even with the state of the economy. The manager of the Southern Unit of the Kettle Moraine State Forest and the Southern Kettle Horse Trail Association have agreed to partner on a project to electrify the horse campground. The friends group will work to raise funds for the campground. There is a horse trail design school June 24-27, 2010 at the Eau Galle Recreation Area. Carpenter passed out a handout.
- *Tourism/Business.* Tourism overall is seeing increases in lodging. Reservations are up significantly compared to the last couple years. The budget for tourism promotions is seeing some cuts as it is competing with surrounding states for attracting tourism dollars here. Michigan is spending about \$30 million, while Minnesota is spending around \$20-25 million on promoting tourism. Wisconsin is spending around \$4 million. Natural resources and trails are a big draw for people to Wisconsin.
- *Bicycling.* The Bicycle Federation of Wisconsin is holding their second annual bike summit at the capitol today to meet with legislators and advocate for the importance of bicycling in Wisconsin and having bicycling as a viable transportation option. UW-Madison recently released an economic impact study of bicycling in the state. According to the study, the bicycle industry contributes about \$1.5 billion annually to Wisconsin. Human Powered Trails in La Crosse is working with the DNR on the issue of bike access to lands purchased with Stewardship funds. The League of American Bicyclists ranked Wisconsin #2 in the nation for bicycling, for such things as DOT policies, trail systems and opportunities, rail trails and off-road trails. Lance Armstrong will be coming to Madison for a Ride-the-Drive event in August. Handout: Trails at Risk from Invasive Species.
- *Hiking/Walking.* Phillips would like to propose that the month of November be dedicated to all forms of hunting, rather than having an extended deer rifle season in October and December, or a youth hunt in October. October is a popular time for outdoor recreation on trails because of fall colors, and December is a good month for snowmobiling, skiing, and other winter trail sports. Phillips stated he would be willing to work with other council members to create a resolution that captures the concerns of the council regarding hunting seasons. Phillips stated that in Britain, 'right to roam' laws gives everyone access to the country's landscapes, and that most towns and villages are connected by public paths. *Phillips submitted a written report prior to the meeting.*



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10:45 A.M. – DNR Report

- The Wisconsin State Park System is expecting 2010 to be the busiest year ever. The Park System put out an annual report that highlighted some of the projects and happenings over the past year. Schuller passed out the 2009 annual report.
- The DNR and Jefferson County signed a Memorandum of Understanding on how to manage the Glacial Heritage Area. Master plans for High Cliff State Park and Point Beach State Forest are underway. The DNR is looking at the potential of canoe/kayak campsites at Point Beach and a possible partnership to develop a longer distance equestrian trail at High Cliff. Copper Falls State Park will soon be starting the Master Plan process. There have been a lot of meetings for the Capital Springs Master Plan. Capital Springs is a partnership project with the DNR and the Dane County Parks Department.
- Friends groups and DNR staff are organizing events for the second annual Work*Play*Earth Day at locations across the state for events on April 24 and May 8, 2010. Friends and volunteer groups continue to help the Parks program. There are 84 friends groups dedicated to specific state properties.
- The DNR is working on a Master Plan variance template and criteria for the statewide UTV pilot program. The DNR is looking to allow UTVs on state trails where wide enough and appropriate. Biermeier will send the template and criteria to the council.
- The DNR is continuing to look for a site for a motorize recreation area that will be accepted by the local unit of government. The DNR has had a meeting with Forest County, and other counties have approached with an interest. The area would be a fairly large track of land, and a feasibility study would be needed.
- The DNR is working with user groups on the redesign and opening of the trails at Richard Bong State Recreation Area. There are some issues with the redesign primarily associated with water.
- Brown stated the STC passed a resolution in support of Complete Streets. The Complete Streets bill passed. The bill is tied to funding, and Complete Streets is not necessarily required on every road at properties, but the DNR is working with the DOT to meet the requirements in the bill.
- The issue of water regulations will be coming up for all trails. Park System staff is working with Water Regulation staff on what the regulations will mean for trails. The DNR is waiting to hear back from FEMA on some regulation aspects.
- The Parks program has developed a water trails webpage which provides a compilation of water trail information in Wisconsin, and not just for state properties. The Fox Cities group is putting some water trails signage together for a trail to be available this summer.
- The last section of the Badger State Trail will be paved this summer. A grand opening will be held when it is finished.
- There are two projects involving Wisconsin being discussed at the Federal level; the concept of a National Wildlife Refuge in southeast Wisconsin and northern Illinois, and the concept of a Federal Heritage Riverway project including the Fox and Wisconsin rivers.



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11:00 A.M. – 2010 Forestry Assessment and Statewide Strategy

- Rebecca Gass, DNR Forest Planner, presented the 2010 Forestry Assessment and Statewide Strategy to the council. The assessment is open for public comment through April 23. The Forest Strategy is not just for state-owned or public lands, but for all forested lands in the state. Gass described the four themes in the assessment, and passed out an outline for the theme of Forests as Economic Contributors. The use of forests for recreation is rapidly increasing. The assessment will help direct forest management over the next 10 years.
- *2010 Forestry Assessment and Statewide Strategy PowerPoint Presentation to the STC*
<http://dnr.wi.gov/org/land/parks/trails/council/minutes/042210forest.pdf>

11:30 A.M. – Report on Recommendations for Improving the Structure of the State Trails Council

- Harden, McFadzen and Phillips met with Senator Holperin in April to discuss how to move forward most effectively and quickly with the Ad Hoc Committee recommendations to restructure the Council. Representative Mursau was invited, but unable to attend the meeting. Harden passed out an overview of the meeting.
- Harden stated it was a positive meeting and Senator Holperin was willing to sponsor legislation to expand the number of council members from 9 to 11 for next year's Legislative session. The STC will have the language drafted and ready to go for the start of the session.
- Until the legislation is officially passed to increase membership on the council, there are 9 voting members. McFadzen stated that during their meeting, they discussed engaging new members on the council in the interim, by having voting and non-voting members. Harden stated that what came out of the meeting was agreement that this was something the STC could do itself, if funding is available, similarly to how the Ad Hoc Committee was conducted. The STC will need to revise the bylaws, but the Council can have non-voting members at the table to take part in the discussion and provide input, the only difference would be that when a vote is needed, these members would have to abstain from the vote because the Governor has not officially appointed them to the Council.
- Harden proposed the Council operate as an 11-member council with the additional representatives from the groups identified in the Ad Hoc Committee Report. When a vote is needed, only the Governor-appointed members would cast a vote. (The Ad Hoc Committee Report identified the user groups that would have a seat on both a 9-member and 11-member Council. If the current council was to operate as an 11-member council, the STC would potentially be adding the following non-voting members/representatives: Water Trails, Off-Road Bicycles, 4-Wheel Drive Vehicles, Off-Highway Motorcycles, and a Skating Sports user or other trail user from the non-motorized/mechanized category).
- Motion to include non-voting members on the STC by Thornton. Seconded by Maletzke for discussion. The STC will still proceed with Legislation to officially increase membership to 11. Council members will need to decide on language for a bill. McFadzen stated that if the proposed Legislation passes and the council is officially comprised of 11-members, some of these non-voting members could transition to voting members if the Governor chooses to appoint them. Motion passes.
- Harden stated the STC will need to create a job description and application to vote on and finalize at the August meeting for these non-voting positions. The STC will also need to outline the



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appointment process, including how to handle the nominations and interviews. User groups could nominate someone who regularly participates in the specific trail use for that position, but the positions should be open for anyone to apply.

12:30 A.M. – Lunch

- DNR Secretary Matt Frank met with the Council during lunch. Secretary Frank recently attended the White House Health Summit which addressed the long term goal of connecting kids to the outdoors, which is a national focus and a priority for the Wisconsin DNR. Wisconsin has a tremendous outdoors heritage and many beautiful areas and recreation opportunities available for its citizens. State Government has had some budget challenges and Secretary Frank commended State Parks staff for their leadership and also thanked the many volunteers and partners for their essential help and support. Other states have closed parks, but Wisconsin has kept its parks open, as outdoor tourism and recreation is a very important part of the state's economy.

1:00 P.M. – Presentation for “Open the Outdoors”

- Andy Janicki, DNR Accessibility Coordinator, gave a presentation which highlighted the facilities and features available to users with disabilities in Wisconsin, including accessible trails, cabins, universal picnic tables, adaptable kayaks, boat launches, cross-country skis, fishing piers, hunting opportunities and more. "Open the Outdoors" is the nation-wide effort to provide disabled individuals with accessible recreation opportunities. <http://dnr.wi.gov/org/at/af/open/>
- “Open the Outdoors” PowerPoint Presentation to the STC:
<http://dnr.wi.gov/org/land/parks/trails/council/minutes/042210open.pdf>

1:30 P.M. – Hunting Seasons

- Keith Warnke, Big Game Ecologist for the DNR Wildlife Program, gave a presentation on the different deer hunting seasons in Wisconsin. Some deer hunting seasons overlap with popular times for trail recreation, especially during the fall color season and the start of the winter sports season. Deer herd management goals are described in Administrative Code NR 1.15. The Natural Resources Board (NRB) will be discussing issues associated with deer hunting at about every meeting this year.
- *Deer Hunting Seasons PowerPoint Presentation to the STC:*
<http://dnr.wi.gov/org/land/parks/trails/council/minutes/042210hunting.pdf>

2:30 P.M. – Economic Benefits of Trails

- Tom Huber and Linda Stoll (via telephone), Outreach Specialist for the Center for Land Use Education at UW-Stevens Point, updated the Council on a recent court decision involving the town of Menasha. The town of Menasha built a trail through the community. The town then did an assessment of all properties along the trail, much like it does for assessing properties with adjacent sidewalks. A developer challenged the validity of the assessment, feeling that the trail was of no value to the commercial property. The court ruled in favor of the developer.
- At issue was a lack of studies for the economic impact of trails for specific properties. There are studies that show trails and pathways provide economic benefits to communities, but none that focus on the benefits to individual businesses or commercial properties.



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- Stoll stated that what is needed to avoid a similar situation, is a study conducted of businesses adjacent to multi-modal trails, to demonstrate the value a trail brings to the business, such as a survey that asks if the trail brings in customers, provides a transportation option, or a fitness and recreation option for staff. Stoll also stated the study should be conducted for all different types of businesses and residential properties, and would need to be intuitive in court.
- Huber will talk to Representative Spencer Black, who initiated the UW-Madison graduate student report on the economic impact of bicycling. Some funding may need to be found to conduct a new study. McFadzen stated the council should also look at collecting what existing studies and information is already available. Huber will give an update at the August STC meeting.

3:00 P.M. – Other Business

- Carpenter stated he would like to see the STC better foster relationships with elected officials, to make sure members are inviting legislators to meetings and to recognize and give legislators an opportunity to speak to the Council at meetings.
- The August meeting location will be at High Cliff State Park on Friday, August 6, 2010. The council talked about having a tour in August, but may move that to the October meeting. The October meeting will be held at Capital Springs State Recreation Area.
- Thornton stated the issue of bridge inspections and other associated costs with bridge maintenance are becoming an issue for user groups. The STC may want to consider discussing at a future meeting.
- The potential reversion of the Cheese Country Trail back to rail use is on hold and may not happen.

3:10 P.M. – Public Comment

- Matt Tucker stated Michigan's Upper Peninsula is very welcoming to off-highway motorcycles, but the state of Wisconsin does not have enough trails or facilities for this user group. Tucker stated a lot of clubs in Wisconsin are disappointed in the policy and direction Wisconsin has for off-highway motorcycles. Harden stated this was one of the issues the Ad Hoc Committee looked at and suggested Tucker get in touch with WOHMA, the Wisconsin Off-Highway Motorcycle Association. WOHMA is currently working on a registration program, which in part is intended to help raise funding for off-highway motorcycle trails and promote the sport.

3:30 P.M. – Adjourn

- Motion to adjourn by Huber. Seconded by McFadzen. Meeting adjourned.

August 6, 2010 Agenda Items

- Update on the economic impact of trails.
- STC to discuss and vote on position description and application for STC member positions and language to propose officially increasing the number of Council Members to 11 in state statute.
- Update of bridge maintenance / water regulations.